

Statewide Snapshot of the Early Care and Education Landscape (Pre-COVID-19)



Regional Structure



DCF divides Wisconsin's 72 counties into five regions—Northeastern (NER), Northern (NR), Southeastern (SER), Southern (SR) and Western (WR).

Wisconsin is home to 11 federally recognized Indigenous Tribes—Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Ho-Chunk Nation, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin, Oneida Nation, Forest County Potawatomi and Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior, Stockbridge-Munsee, Lac du Flambeau and St Croix.

Background Indicators

The overall health and well-being of Wisconsin impacts the needs of children and families and the providers caring for them.

Disparities (racial/ethnic, geographic, socioeconomic) exist across all measures

Health	Employment	Education	Poverty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Uninsured: 6% • % Uninsured ranges from 4% in Waupaca County to 16% in Clark County • % Vaccination: 72% • % Vaccination ranges from 45% in Clark County to 83% in Green County • ACEs: Black children experience 2 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) at a higher rate than their White & Hispanic peers • 58% of adults experience at least one ACE growing up • 15% of adults experience 4+ ACEs • Wisconsin has the highest infant mortality rate for babies born to Black Mothers in the country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Unemployment: 3% • % Unemployment ranges from 2% in Dane County to 6% in Iron and Menominee Counties • Median Household Income: \$60,779 • Median Household Income ranges from \$40,682 in Menominee County to \$87,333 in Waukesha County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Grade Reading Proficiency, % Proficient: 45% • Reading proficiency ranges from 12% in Menominee to 67% in Ozaukee County • % High School Completion: 92% • % High School Completion ranges from 77% in Milwaukee and Menominee Counties to 98% in Pepin County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Poverty: 11% • % Poverty ranges from 4% in Ozaukee County to 27% in Menominee • % Child Poverty: 14% • % Child Poverty ranges from 4% in Ozaukee to 43% in Menominee County • % Child Poverty by Race/Ethnicity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Children: 13% • Hispanic Children: 30% • Black Children: 37% • % of Households Struggling to Make Ends Meet: 38% • % of Households to Make Ends Meet ranges from 27% in Ozaukee Co to 62% in



Early Care and Education (ECE)

Wisconsin Departments of Children and Families (DCF), Health Services (DHS) and Public Instruction (DPI) all support families and young children along the continuum of care from 0-5. Through public, non profit and private partnerships, Wisconsin strives to provide a seamless system of support during this critical period in a child's development. Programs include **home visitation**, **parent support**, **early intervention**, **Head Start**, **4K** and **child care**.

Home Visiting

[Family Foundations Home Visiting \(FFHV\)](#) supports pregnant women and families with young children. In 2018, FFHV reached 2,000 families in 31 Counties and 5 Tribes. Children and families also had access to a variety of non-FFHV home visitation programs.

Parent Support & Service Navigation

Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, Family Resource Centers, Wisconsin Well Badger, 2-1-1 and the [Southeastern Regional Center](#) for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs all support families in the SER.

Parent Support and Service Navigation

Resources & Navigation: help families connect with community resources in their area and navigate accessing services.

- * Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
- * Family Resource Centers
- * FAST (Families and Schools Together)
- * 2-1-1
- * Wisconsin Well Badger
- * Regional Centers for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)

Family Support Programs: support parents, families and/or professional partners. Some focus on specific issues, such as special health care needs or behavioral health.

- * Trauma and Recovery Project
- * Connections Count
- * Family Voices of Wisconsin
- * Wisconsin Family Ties
- * WI FACETS
- * Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative
- * Condition-specific programs, such as Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin, Wisconsin Families for Hands & Voices, Niemann-Pick Disease Foundation, Wisconsin Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and many more.
- * Many local agencies throughout the State provide parenting support programs, such as The Parent Outlet in Winnebago County, Canopy Center in Madison, Parent Connection in the Fox Valley, The Parenting Place in La Crosse and Adams/Juneau

Peer Parent Support Programs: connect parents with other parents for peer support.

- * Parent to Parent : a statewide program run by DHS
- * Condition-specific parent matching programs, such as DHS' Parents Reaching Out and DPI's Parent Mentor Program for families of children with hearing loss.
- * Parent Cafes held by Supporting Families Together Association and local partners support parents through peer-to-peer learning. Available in: Brown, Dane, Dunn, Fond du Lac, LaFayette, Marathon, Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Portage, Polk, Racine, Rock, Sawyer, Sheboygan, St Croix, Trempealeau, Washburn and Winnebago Counties.

Health Programs

Every county has a [WIC](#) office for nutrition, pregnancy and breastfeeding support. [Prenatal Care Coordination](#) is available through local health departments. Many nonprofit programs also address maternal child health disparities, including Harambee Village Pregnancy, Birth and Breastfeeding Care, Promotoras de Salud and the African American Breastfeeding Network.

Early Intervention

Children who qualify have access to public early intervention and/or special education through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C ([Birth to 3 Program](#)) and Part B ([Early Childhood Special Education](#)) programs. In 2017, 5,800 children had an Individualized Family Services Plan for Part C services. In the 2018-2019 school year, 16,403 children had an Individualized Education Plan for Part B services.

Head Start

Early Head Start serves children 0-3 and Head Start 3-5 year olds. According to the Wisconsin Head Start Association, 6% of children under 3 living in poverty had access to Early Head Start and 29% of children 3-5 living in poverty had access to Head Start. In 2019, 15,440 children were enrolled, including 1,100 tribal children and 500 children of migrant or seasonal workers.






4K

Publicly funded 4-year-old Kindergarten is available in schools and a community approach to 4K that provides 4K services in a child care, preschool and/or Head Start environment. In 2019-2020, 406 school districts offered 4K with 111 districts offering Community Approach to 4K.





Child Care

The **Preschool Development Grant** uses **Access**, **Affordability**, **Quality** and **Workforce** through the **Lens of Equity and Inclusion** as a framework for evaluating early care and education across the state.

Access


-  54% of all WI children and 68% of children in rural areas live in a child care desert.
-  Nonstandard hour care to support a 2nd or 3rd shift job is a barrier for many working parents.
-  From 2007 to 2016, the number of licensed family centers dropped by 42% and the number of certified family providers declined by 75%.
-  There are twice as many children 0-5 in Wisconsin as there are child care slots.
-  [Wisconsin Shares](#) child care subsidies are available to help offset the cost of childcare. Families participating in Wisconsin Shares must enroll their children with a YoungStar-participating provider. YoungStar participation has been steadily decreasing.

Affordability

-  The federal government defines affordable as spending no more than 7% of yearly income on child care. No state meets this definition.
-  The market rate for Wisconsin infant care in 2017 ranged from \$650 to \$1,250 per month.
-  The cost of infant care in some parts of the state surpasses college tuition costs.
-  When single parents pay out of pocket for infant center care, they pay 50% of their income and 90% for center care for two children. Two-parent families earning the median salary pay 30% of their income for care for two children.



Quality

51% of YoungStar participating providers are considered high quality with a rating of 3-5 Stars.

-  As of February 2020, more than 25,000 children receiving WI Shares were enrolled in a high quality program.

Workforce

In 2018, the average hourly wage for a Wisconsin child care worker was \$13. The average annual income of Wisconsin child care workers was \$2,000 less than the US average.

-  Staff at child care programs with 50% or more children with child care subsidies had lower wages, were less likely to have a degree and had a higher turn over rate.
-  A provider with an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education earns less than others with a similar degree.

As part of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Wisconsin is building a comprehensive Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan to provide a [holistic picture of Early Care and Education in WI](#).